Rusk Asserts Right to Give Critics Reply

Also Cites Danger Of Foe Erring on Division in U.S.

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WILIAMSBURG, Va., May 28 — Secretary of State Dean Rusk defended the citizen's right to criticize his government at this fount of liberty today — and asserted his own right to reply.

Here where the sparks of liberty ignited American independence 190 years ago, Rusk said:

"A Secretary of State stands second to no one in defending — and celebrating — the right of full and free discussion as a cornerstone of democracy."

But the Secretary also said that "there is the danger that a foreign government may miscalculate our intentions" by "showing of division among our people."

He said: "There are strong reasons to believe that the militant Communists of Asia have been sustained by the conviction that world opinion or internal dissension within the United States will cause us to withdraw from South Vietnam. That will not happen. But it is not easy to convince Hanoi and Peking."

Rusk gave the principal address here at the annual "Prelude to Independence" ceremonies which mark the hectic period when this Colonial capital of Virginia in 1776 launched the process that produced American independence.

He told an audience composed of large numbers of foreign diplomats that "a Secretary of State has, of course, a special obligation to discuss our foreign policy as fully and freely as possible."

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"I have tried to fulfill that obligation," said Rusk. However, he said, "it does not require that I remain silent when other citizens criticize our policies—and particularly not when their criticism has little or no relation to verifiable facts."

"Some time ago," he said, "I referred to certain assertions or arguments of certain critics as 'nonsense.'"

"If my comment erred," said Rusk, "it was on the side of generosity. But I was immediately accused of trying to suppress freedom of expression.

"Not at all," said Rusk, "I was merely claiming a little of it myself."

Well Spring of Policy

Rusk said, "Our national commitments to freedom are the well springs of our foreign policy. They explain our attitude toward colonial questions, our concern for the future of the people under totalitarian regimes, why we are more comfortable in dealing with democracies than with dictatorships, and why we advocate self-determination for all peoples."

"The paramount issue of our time," said Rusk, "is whether or not the world is to be organized on the principles of freedom, peace, and genuine co-existence sketched out in the Preamble and Articles 1 and 2 of the United Nations Charter."

There is always "a certain tension between the professional duties of a foreign minister and his commitment to freedom of expression in a democratic society," Rusk said.

"Professional diplomacy requires a certain amount of temporary secrecy: secret information, secret discussion and negotiations. Public discussion of certain situations at certain times may be distorted by lack of knowledge of facts that are available to the President and Secretary of State — yet, which they cannot at the moment fully divulge."

Rain partially dampened the usually very colorful outdoor ceremonies at Williamsburg which precede this annual celebration.

Hue Incident Distresses Americans, Rusk Says

United Press International

Secretary Rusk told the South Vietnam government yesterday that Americans are distressed at the sacking of a United States Information Service library at Hue Thursday.

Rusk's message to Foreign Minister Tran Van Do was in reply to an apologetic cable from him over the library incident.

Several hundred South Vietnamese youths broke into the library building, threw out and burned books and furniture, and set fire to the building. It was 70 per cent destroyed.

Tran had cabled Rusk expressing consternation and "sincere regrets" over the incident.